



News from

## **Councilmember Todd Gloria**

---

City of San Diego — District Three

### **NEWS RELEASE**

For immediate release: October 6, 2015

Contact: Katie Keach, 619-847-8274

### **City Council Unanimously Approves Referendum Reforms** *Amendments Ensure Greater Disclosure of Petition Funders*

*SAN DIEGO, CA (October 6, 2015)* – San Diego City Councilmember Todd Gloria today announced the City Council's bipartisan approval of his referendum process reforms. The City Council voted unanimously to amend the City's Election Campaign Control Ordinance to make required disclosures for referenda and initiatives consistent with current rules for traditional campaigns.

**"Today the City Council took a step toward returning the referendum to the people by increasing transparency and providing more timely disclosure of campaign funders,"** said Councilmember Gloria.

The approved amendments include the filing of additional campaign statements with the City Clerk during the signature gathering period to increase transparency and provide more timely information on campaign funders.

Specific changes approved today include the following

- 1) Require committees formed to support or oppose an initiative or referendum to file a Form 497 within 10 days after petition circulation begins, to disclose contributions of \$100 or more received since January 1 or since the most recent campaign comprehensive statement;
- 2) Require committees formed to support or oppose an initiative or referendum to file Form 497 within 24 hours during the signature-gathering phase to disclose contributions of \$1,000 or more; and
- 3) Require committees that make independent expenditures to support or oppose an initiative or referendum to file Forms 496 within 24 hours during the signature gathering phase to disclose expenditures and funding sources.

These filings mirror the heightened disclosures required by state law for campaign committees in the timeframe directly preceding a traditional election.

Currently, local ballot measure committees are required to file comprehensive campaign disclosure statements, also known as Form 460, on a quarterly basis. As such, during the 30-day referendum period, the public typically has no access to meaningful information regarding the individuals or entities that are spending money to support or oppose the petition.

**"In recent years, well-funded corporate special interests intent on buying the results they could not achieve through the public legislative process have used deceptive referenda to block progress and subvert the decision of the City Council on the Barrio Logan Community**

- MORE -

**Plan Update, the affordable housing linkage fee, and the minimum wage increase. By making fundraising and expenditure reporting requirements consistent with traditional campaign disclosures, the public will be better informed about the true intent of the measure before they sign a petition,”** said Councilmember Gloria.

Last summer, powerful organizations representing national hoteliers and fast food franchises masqueraded as the “Small Business Coalition” to fight the minimum wage increase approved by the City Council. They deceived enough San Diegans to sign a petition that the measure’s implementation was put on hold and will appear on the June 2016 ballot. Several hundred San Diegans withdrew their signatures upon learning the true nature of the petition was to oppose the minimum wage increase. Had the Small Business Coalition been required to disclose its funders during the signature gathering period instead of months later, many San Diegans might not have signed the petitions.

On May 14, 2015, Councilmember Gloria brought forward a proposal to the City Council Charter Review Committee to amend the City’s campaign laws to require more timely disclosure of contributions and expenditures associated with referendary and initiative petitions. The Charter Committee unanimously directed the Ethics Commission to consider these proposed amendments and return to Council with the draft changes to the City’s campaign laws.

Councilmember Gloria is working on additional reforms to the referendum process, which are expected to be considered by the City Council by mid-November.

###